

REMARKS

The Examiner is thanked for indicating that claims 11-15 are allowed. The Examiner also is thanked for the indication that claims 2-10, 17-24, and 26-30 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

Claims 1, 3, 4, 8-16, 18-20, 25, 27, 28, and 31-39 are pending in the application. Claims 1, 11, 16, 25, 31, 34-35, and 38 are independent. By the foregoing Amendment, claims 1, 3, 8, 11, 15-16, 18-19, 25, and 27 have been amended, claims 2, 5-7, 17, 21-24, 26, and 29-30 have been canceled, and claims 31-39 have been added. These changes are believed to introduce no new matter and their entry is respectfully requested.

Rejection of Claims 1, 16, and 25 Under 35 U.S.C. §103(a)

The Examiner rejected claims 1, 16, and 25 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as unpatentable over U.S. Publication Patent No. 2002/0129623 A1 to Nonomura et al. (hereinafter “Nonomura”). To establish a *prima facie* case of obviousness, an Examiner must show three things (1) that there is some suggestion or motivation to modify a reference or combine reference teachings to arrive at the claimed invention and (2) that the references teach or suggest each and every element of the claimed invention, and (3) that there is a reasonable expectation of success (MPEP §2143). Applicants respectfully traverse the rejection.

Although Applicants believe claim 1 is patentable over Nonomura as written, in the interest of expediting prosecution of the present application Applicants have amended claim 1 to incorporate the subject matter of claim 2, which the Examiner indicated would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. Applicants respectfully submit that claim 1 is now in condition for allowance. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request that the Examiner reconsider and remove the rejection of claim 1. Claims 3-4 and 8-10 properly depend from patentable claim 1 and therefore also should be in condition for allowance.

Although Applicants believe claim 16 is patentable over Nonomura as written, in the interest of expediting prosecution of the present application Applicants have amended claim 16 to incorporate the subject matter of claim 17, which the Examiner indicated would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. Applicants respectfully submit that claim 16 is now in condition for allowance. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request that the Examiner reconsider and remove the rejection of claim 16. Claims 18-20 properly depend from patentable claim 16 and therefore also should be in condition for allowance.

Although Applicants believe claim 25 is patentable over Nonomura as written, in the interest of expediting prosecution of the present application Applicants have amended claim 25 to incorporate the subject matter of claim 26, which the Examiner indicated would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. Applicants respectfully submit that claim 25 is now in condition for allowance. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request that the Examiner reconsider and remove the rejection of claim 25. Claims 27-28 properly depend from patentable claim 25 and therefore also should be in condition for allowance.

New Claims 31-33

In the Office Action, the Examiner indicated that claim 5 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. New claim 31 incorporates the subject matter of claims 1 and 5. New claim 31 therefore should be in condition for allowance. Claims 32-33 properly depend from claim 31 and also therefore should be in condition for allowance.

New Claim 34

In the Office Action, the Examiner indicated that claim 21 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. New claim 34 incorporates the subject matter of claims 16 and 21. New claim 34 therefore should be in condition for allowance.

New Claims 35-37

In the Office Action, the Examiner indicated that claim 22 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. New claim 35 incorporates the subject matter of claims 16 and 22. New claim 35 therefore should be in condition for allowance. Claims 36-37 properly depend from claim 35 and also therefore should be in condition for allowance.

New Claims 38-39

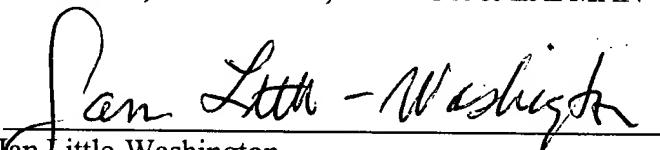
In the Office Action, the Examiner indicated that claim 29 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. New claim 38 incorporates the subject matter of claims 25 and 29. New claim 38 therefore should be in condition for allowance. Claim 39 properly depends from claim 38 and also therefore should be in condition for allowance.

CONCLUSION

Applicants submit that all grounds for objection and rejection have been properly accommodated, traversed, or rendered moot, and that the application is now in condition for allowance. The Examiner is invited to telephone the undersigned representative if the Examiner believes that an interview might be useful for any reason.

Respectfully submitted,
BLAKELY, SOKOLOFF, TAYLOR & ZAFMAN

Date: 6/28/2004


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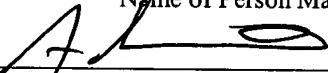
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